

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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R 310638Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0317

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, ELAB, FI

SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY VISITORS - PENTTILA AND LAXEN

REF: A) HELSINKI 742, B) HELSINKI 1383, C) HELSINKI 1490,
D) STATE 182799

1. EMBASSY DELIGHTED TO LEARN THAT DEPARTMENT AND DOL
WILL ASSIST PENTTILA AND LAXEN IN WASHINGTON.

2. AS NOTED REF A, PENTTILA DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH
BUT LAXEN, WHOSE ENGLISH IS EXCELLENT, WILL ACT AS
INTERPRETER. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE NAME OF
PENTTILA'S WASHINGTON HOTEL BUT EXPECT TO FIND OUT NEXT
WEEK. PERHAPS FINNISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON CAN BE OF
ASSISTANCE.

3. FULL BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON PENTTILA WAS SUBMITTED IN
HELSINKI A-137 OF JULY 24, 1974 WHICH NOMINATED HIM FOR
INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANT, WHICH HE WAS ULTIMATELY
UNABLE TO ACCEPT. PENTTILA WAS BORN JUNE 17, 1923.
BEFORE BECOMING CHAIRMAN OF THE METALWORKERS UNION IN
1967, PENTTILA HAD SERVED FOR 15 YEARS AS AN OFFICER
OF THE PAPERWORKERS' UNION AND THEN FOR A COUPLE OF
YEARS AS FIRST SECRETARY OF THE FINNISH TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION (SAK). HE IS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE OF THE FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (THE
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ONLY ACTIVE TRADE UNIONIST ON THAT BOARD) AND ONE OF THE MOST

INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS IN FINLAND. HIS WIFE OF 30 YEARS TOOK HER OWN LIFE AT THE HEIGHT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN THE METALWORKERS' UNION LAST FALL (SEE 75 HELSINKI 2354).

4. FULL BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON KAJ LAXEN IS AVAILABLE IN HELSINKI A-308 OF LATE NOVEMBER 1973 WHICH NOMINATED HIM AS AN ALTERNATE IVP GRANTEE. LAXEN WAS NEVER OFFERED A GRANT. LAXEN WAS BORN JULY 4, 1943 AND BEFORE JOINING THE METALWORKERS UNION IN 1973 HAD MADE HIS CAREER IN THE NEWSPAPER AND INFORMATION FIELD. HE WAS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY SWEDISH LANGUAGE PAPER ARBETARBLADET FROM 1970 TO 1973 AND FOR SIX MONTHS IN 1973 WAS CHIEF SECRETARY IN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. LAXEN BELONGS TO THE EXTREME LEFT WING OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH A NUMBER OF RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. HIS WIFE, MARIANNE, IS A LEADER IN FINLAND'S WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND A FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF FINNISH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (TEINILIITTO). SHE IS PERHAPS EVEN MORE RADICAL THAN HER HUSBAND. LAXEN HAS TAKEN SOME EXTREME POSITIONS IN HIS CAPACITY AS A MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY-APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OF THE FINNISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION. HE HAS BEEN CORRECT AND FRIENDLY WITH EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES DURING HIS SERVICE IN THE METALWORKERS' UNION, BUT IS USUALLY RATHER GUARDED IN WHAT HE SAYS.
HOUSTON

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